



## MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Monitor's Report Notes Broad Improvement at DCS** *Spells Out Remaining Challenges for Tennessee's Public Child Welfare Agency*

NASHVILLE -- Federal court monitors cited across-the-board improvements at the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, where an ambitious reform effort is underway on behalf of those in state foster care. The reform work is not complete, however, as Tennessee still has several benchmarks to meet before it can exit federal court oversight under the terms of the Brian A. consent decree.

"The report shows considerable progress in a number of key areas, and we are very proud of that," said DCS Commissioner Viola P. Miller. "The report contained no information on areas of improvement needed of which we were not keenly aware. We believe that we are making substantial progress toward demonstrating compliance with the consent decree."

New York-based Children's Rights Inc. sued the state on behalf of Tennessee's foster children, and in 2001, Tennessee entered into an agreement to improve its foster-care programs.

Among the sustained improvements: The number of children in state care has been reduced from nearly 11,000 in early 2004 to about 7,500 today. Tennessee has received national recognition for its gains in finding adoptive homes for children. It has adopted a practice model that involves families and youth in case planning and decision-making. It has boosted the recruitment, training and retention of competent, caring and committed case managers.

For DCS, there were no surprises in Monday's scheduled filing. The report reflects the collaboration between the department, the monitoring committee and the plaintiffs. In areas where improvements are required, DCS already has strategies in place to address those needs.

These include enhancing the front-line case practice work, improving the recruitment and retention of quality resource homes and decreasing the number of times that children are moved once they enter care.

More information about Brian A. and DCS is here: [www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/fedinitiatives.htm](http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/fedinitiatives.htm)